

CHAPTER II

Small Farm Economy

THE small farmers' family groups inhabit the holdings or plots of land from which they make the livelihood we have described numerically. Except in a few and special cases, there is no physical separation of house plot from fields; the individual family's plot is usually a continuous one, and the other forms of settlement present in Ireland are rapidly being reshaped with that condition as the ideal. Consequently, the farmhouse is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. In it the farm family group spends its entire life, sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work upon the fields. 361
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The farm family lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house. And the unit is identified with the family in the eyes of its community in name and ownership. Outside this range, the farmer has little participation in affairs in comparison with others of the population. His wife and children have even less. Within this range most of the activity marking the relations of the human beings who make up the group takes place. 592

The "land," as we have seen, is usually divided into "field," "meadow," "garden," "bog," and "mountain," according to its character and agricultural use. These divisions make up the holding and represent the productive 231
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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

[574] The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the removal of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child [604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By 592 the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male relative, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes 592 himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over 562 expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

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her unmarried brother to live with her and directed his efforts in draining a large field. The two of them ran the farm very successfully, though the brother grumbled. In another, a "landless" young man pleaded successfully to a Land Commission official for an addition to his aunt's holding, presented his case, and carried out the negotiations, but the final reference had to be made, of course, to the aunt for whom he worked, for in such case the feeling that the man must represent the family and farm unit in the community at large is sufficiently strong to push a subordinate "boy" into the position usually filled by the farm husband and father. 589 592 ● 562 [654]

Similarly with several old bachelors. A nephew moves in and works the farm, but the old fellow keeps strict control even to regulating the nephew's expenditures for amusements. In one case, where a widower had a small son, the son was taken in by a childless sister and raised by her, and when he grew up and married he inherited the sister's farm. His father remarried and raised a second brood. In another, two spinsters spent their lives on a farm worked by their two cousins. 589 592

The attitudes of the country people to these arrangements show that incomplete farm families are felt to be departures from the normal; they are subjects for commiseration. Such phrases as "It's a hard life she has with only the brother and no husband to help her" and "He's all by himself with only his son there on the land, poor fellow," are commonly applied to them. 589

The policy of the Land Commission in increasing farm holdings is very significant in this regard. The officials recognize the social value of the full family explicitly. According to the official in charge of land division in Clare, who has had successful experience in other regions as well: 654 594

An old-age pensioner without family could not be considered for an addition of land, nor could a couple of spinsters. . . .

CHAPTER V

The Kinship System

THE mothers and fathers who order farm life are themselves sons and daughters. They have or have had (before their creation of a family of their own upon the farm) much the same relationships with their parents as their children have with them. Indeed in many cases households comprise three generations. Grandfathers and grandmothers of the children live in the house. Family structure is not confined to the immediate present family group, but descends with each generation as the boys and girls reach social maturity at marriage and the creation of their own families.

This descent forms the basis of any kinship system; it provides also the basis upon which the "friends" to whom one has obligations in rural Ireland are reckoned. The individuals comprised within the system are so because of their sharing of that descent in common. These are one's "people" or "friends," in the countryman's vocabulary.

The terms express the generic category into which the kindred fall. Both terms are, in a sense, translations of Gaelic idiom. The first, *people*, corresponds exactly with the Irish *muinntear*. The second in ordinary rural usage refers not to a comrade, as in English, but to one's relatives. Even in the towns one's father, mother, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, are referred to as "immediate friends." In the countryside one speaks of one's kinsmen as one's

CHAPTER VII

Family Transition at Marriage

WITH the transfer of land at the marriage of the son who remains to work the farm, the relations of the members of the farm family to each other and to the farm they work undergo a drastic change. In the first place, the headship of the old couple under whom the family group worked undergoes change. The old couple relinquish the farm, they enter the age grade of the dying, and direction of the enterprise of the group passes from their hands to those of the young people. Something of the change has already been indicated in the "writings." From the point of view of the father, it means the abandonment of the ownership he has long enjoyed; from the point of view of the old woman it means she is no longer the "woman of the house." Her place is taken by the incoming daughter-in-law. Naturally, this change is accomplished in effect only with difficulty and with considerable reluctance upon the part of the old couple. Where the transition goes smoothly, father and son continue to work the farm together, but more often as the father grows older he retires to his seat by the hearth. For example, the authors know one family, consisting of a young man and his wife, their two children, and the old couple, which was regarded as a model of family harmony in the neighborhood. The young man did all the heavy work of the farm, but his father worked by his side. Yet the initiative in agricultural matters was clearly the

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592 young man's. The man, almost eighty, did not want to re-
888 main idle. "Time enough to sit by the fire in the winter,"
he would say. The greatest compliment the neighbors had
for them was: "Look at the C—s. Old Johnny gives his boy
a hand with everything. You wouldn't know which one has
the farm."

592 The coming-in of the daughter-in-law is sometimes not
888 so harmonious. Disputes arise, as the provisions made in
606 the "writings" indicate. The following quotation from an
official with years of experience in dealing with country
people illustrates:

As years go on, either the parents die or, if they live sufficiently long, they receive the old-age pension. Before they are qualified for this, the farms have to be made over to a son or daughter. This is done on the occasion of the son's marriage. The father reserves to himself and his wife the use of a room and the freedom of the kitchen, and they are entitled to all their food. The points were carefully discussed at length in the process of matchmaking, and the family of the future wife had no hesitation in agreeing, realizing that such points formed the final phase of a cycle of life on the farm. If the daughter-in-law has been well and properly advised by her mother, she immediately on her arrival in the new house submits tactfully to all proposals of her mother-in-law and lets the old lady feel that she is still the master mariner. If she didn't, it would cause a lot of trouble, as sometimes happens.

[626] In such cases, the mediations of the parish priest and public opinion generally patch up a compromise, but, as far as the authors have observed, the transition is a gradual and successful one. The young woman usually serves a sort of apprenticeship at the hands of the mother-in-law in the new household, and at least during the young woman's childbearing years the older one maintains her control.

[577] An open breach between the two couples is universally condemned, of course; "turning the old people out on the

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side of the road" has occurred, although the authors found 888
no instance of it. If, however, the new family finds the old 606
too great a burden, the old may go to the County Home, 577
where the poor and derelict old people are maintained. A
grave stigma of inability to support one's duties still attaches
to this.

It is interesting that the old-age pension, originally de- 592
signed in Great Britain to support the aged members of 888
an industrial population and extended some years later to 737
Ireland, has been incorporated into Irish farm life without
upsetting, but rather reinforcing, the matchmaking pattern.
The tendency is now to turn the farm over to the son as
soon as the father passes his seventieth year. Receipt of the
pension facilitates the maintenance of the old people and
hastens the transfer of land to the son, as the farmers must
divest themselves of their small farms in the majority of cases
in order to become eligible for the pension.

Even from the point of view of the household expense, the
pension is very welcome. In the words of one farmer:

To have old people in the house is a great blessing in these
times because if you have one, it means ten bob a week and, if
you have two, it means a pound a week coming into the house.
You take a man like O'D — and every Friday he will go to
Corrofin [town] to collect his ten bob and he may buy a couple
of bottles of porter, but spend the rest on things for the house
and then come home with a few shillings which will go into the
common fund.

Not only that but it adds at least ten years to a man's life
because the anticipation that each Friday he is to get ten shill-
ings will cheer him up and keep him keen. Any house which
has one old person is well off in the last few years, and, if there
are two, it is a great blessing.

But the blessing the pension represents is more than an
economic aid in bad times. It plays a great role in the transi-
tion the match brings about in family relationships. As
one countrywoman phrased it:

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592 There is no chance that the old people would give up the
888 land but for the pension, and there is no hurrying them. Before
737 the old-age pension the father would keep the fat of the land
578 and there would be argument between them, the young woman
and the old woman slashing each other with tongs, the doors
broke, and it would be two dwellings in the house, like, but
since the old-age pension, there are no rows and, if there are,
then they make it up with the old people for the ten bob a week.

592 If the transition is smooth, there need be no such violence
888 of dispute as the last quotation describes. Each of the mem-
bers of the household must adopt a new role in relation
to the others. The old man abdicates his controlling posi-
tion with his transference of the farm to his son. Usually
such a change goes smoothly enough. If the son can still
seem to defer to superior experience and judgment and
refer decisions to the old man, all goes well. The happiest
compromise is that suggested in the statement of one coun-
tryman:

Every morning, even after I was married, I would go to the
old man and ask him what he thought I should do for the day,
and the old man would say that it is now time to do this or that
or that the cows should have something done for them or the
garden should be prepared. I would go then and spend twenty
to thirty minutes doing what the old man said, and then go
about my own business.

592 It is in the feminine province of farm work and house-
606 hold control that the transition is most difficult. Under the
patrilocal type of marriage here described, the bride is a
stranger and of necessity cannot rely upon the experience of
an association of years in order to meet the new conditions,
as can father and son. In the graphic phrase of the people,
she is the "new woman."

For her the transition brings a violent uprooting from
prior attachments. Unlike her urban sister, she has little
of the ideal of romantic love to help her over the crisis.
Consequently her introduction into the new household is

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gradual, and her assumption of her new duties takes place over a moderately lengthy period. Two considerations, of course, are her primary inspiration in moments of stress: first, that she is now a fully adult woman with a household of her own although she must still share its control with her mother-in-law; and second, that the customary usage of the countryside provides her with an occasional escape back to her own people still on the farm at home. The following quotation expresses one woman's remembrance of her emotional difficulty. It is interesting that it is given expression most effectively in terms of Christmas, the family festival *par excellence* in Ireland:

When I first came here, I didn't like it; I thought I couldn't stand living here, and I was always wanting to go home. I could go home, then, every fortnight. Now it doesn't matter so much and I go home about twice a year. I especially miss home at Christmas time because it is then that you miss those you always used to see, and Christmas doesn't seem right if they are not in it.

But for the bride, as for the old people, the transition brings both a new behavior, and a new habit in her relationship with them. She must learn a nice balance between her new freedom and new full status and the continued control and the vested interest of her mother-in-law. It is a matter between the two women of the household; the father and son prefer to remain neutral witnesses to the process. The statement of one countryman illustrates well the possibilities and the type of new attitude and behavior the young woman must learn to make a satisfactory adjustment:

When a marriage is made, an agreement is drawn up so that the man hands over to his son the land, but makes certain reservations. A new woman is brought into the house. The wife may have modern ideas and be "hoity-toity" about the way to do things, and the old woman and the new woman wouldn't get along. The old man without interfering would light his pipe and go on until the squabble was over.

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592 It might get so bad that the old woman would get up and
606 leave and go live with her daughter. She would do this if the
578 mother of her daughter's husband were dead, even though the
father might still be living in the house. But squabbles are
bad things and, if the new woman would ask the old persons
their opinion and how to do this and that, there would never be
any trouble and the new wife could go ahead and do just as she
pleased and the old people would think that she was doing it
the way that she said. The daughter-in-law, if she did what she
ought, would do this and treat the old folks nice.

[521 The theme of strife between mother and daughter-in-law
522] is one dear to the hearts of the countrymen. It appears very
frequently in conversation and in jokes. If the family is to
continue its existence, the introduction of the new woman
must be effected smoothly. The whole moral force of the
[626] community as well as the interest of family harmony bear
upon the two women. The fear of gossip in the neighbor-
hood operates strongly to keep the young woman with her
husband, and every family makes a strong attempt to hide
its personal troubles as much as possible from the general
knowledge of the community.

Nevertheless, stranger as the new woman may be, the
norms of the community in ordinary cases demand that the
young husband take the part of his wife. The bond between
them is stronger than that between son and parent. As the
quotation above shows, it is usually the mother who must
leave. The country people deplore such an event, but they
know that the son "has right" in so doing. Many statements
of this attitude are to be heard among the small farmers and
any examinations of cases of dispute which end in rupture
show the attitude to be enforced in reality.

That this should be the case reflects the function of the
marriage and matchmaking of the farm family. It provides
for continuance.

592 The new position of the old couple and their desires in
888 the altered situation which has seen their displacement ex-

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press this need for continuance. They are part of the pattern themselves. The statements of the blessings they bring to the farm family with their pension money are very elliptical assessments of their new place within the group.

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In their new role, if the transition has been smooth, they retain, if not a dominance of control and direction of the group economic enterprise, at least a dominance of respect and prestige. They occupy a venerable and dignified place in the community and within the household. The sentiments of which they have been the object during the years of their son's youth and manhood undergo no change, even though their strict control relaxes and may disappear.

Likewise when, with the birth of the bride's children, the newly married couple begin to create a full farm family of their own, the old couple remain a part of the united group. They very soon become the objects of the children's love and respect, and enter into the complex of family relationship and family behavior which fashions the status of the children.

This new completion of the family pattern the countrymen express, as they do the reciprocities of kinship, in terms of help and aid to the economic unit of the farm. One countryman generalized as follows:

When there are children in the house, the old people are a great help to the mother because the old woman would nurse the youngsters and see that they did not fall into the fire or something of that nature, and thus the woman can go about her business. The old woman would help while the old man would keep on at his work just as long as he was able, because it was in the nature of things that he had always done so. As they grew older, they might do some of the lighter work, but they would always help.

He went on to discuss the new relationships between family members and the modification of the immediate family behaviors which the presence of the old couple brings about.

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592 His shifting the topic from help to alignments within the
888 family is entirely unconscious; it could not better illustrate
the connection between work roles and reciprocal inter-
action in the family.

If there was a squabble between the mother and daughter,
the old woman would more than likely stand up for the daugh-
ter. She would teach her how to do things and would have more
patience than the father.

592 Quite as before in the case of the farm economy, the
888 strength of the pattern reveals itself in the aberrant cases.
589 Where there is no old couple to take up new status and
position in the family group, others within the family of
the older generation or even of the same may be forced
into such a position.

Two cases came under the particular notice of the authors.
In one an elder sister became to all intents and purposes
the "old woman" in the house. A widow, she owned the
farm, was in the "west room," and had the place at the hob.
Her younger sister and her husband, who had married into
the farm, managed the farm and knew that their children
would inherit it. The elder sister helped a bit with the house-
hold, but spent much of her time before the fire. Both the
man and woman of the house referred to her as "the old
woman," a term of respect, and one of the authors, who
lived in the house for a time, learned only after much in-
timacy the half-forgotten fact that she was not mother but
sister to the younger woman. In the other case it was a
father's sister who took up the role, the product of long
substitution for a lost mother, and at the match the writings
made provision for her.

888 Intimately connected with the transition at marriage are
561 all the phenomena of age grading so marked in Irish country
life. The old couple advance one step in their course
through life: they enter a new age grade.

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and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth
and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen.
There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite
end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of
house is common, but there is also a squarer type which
may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are
of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled,
rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched
roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors
open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward
kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first
by the Congested Districts Board (1893-1923) are slated
and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they
represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statisti-
cal statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to
correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families,
but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's popu-
lation live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-
room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings,
which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence be-
tween the proportion of small farm population to total
population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen 353
utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [778]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the
"Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found
in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festi-
vals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

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592 with this china only under dire necessity. In many districts
352 the year's supply of home-cured bacon still hangs from the
353 rafters.

343 From the kitchen to the haggard, the farmyards, and cow
sheds is but a step through one of the half-doors. There
are found the sheds and outhouses where all the livestock,
agricultural implements, carts, are kept and the fuel supply
and the hayrick stand.

513 Sleeping arrangements reflect the age grading and the
sexual arrangements within the family. Children generally
561 occupy the "loft," a boarded attic covering from a quarter
562 to a half of the space under the peak of the roof. If space
is restricted, they may also occupy the "settlebed" in the
kitchen, or they may be divided up between the two on
the basis of sex. Older children and the married couple will
occupy the bedrooms.

353 The room, however, which we described as occupying
512 the part of the rectangle behind the hearth in the kitchen is
of especial interest. It may or may not be used as a bedroom.
It is generally so used only when space is limited. But in
this room all the objects of sentimental value (except the
shrine and the dresser in the kitchen) are always kept: the re-
ligious pictures, the ceremonial objects brought in by the
bride at marriage, and the bric-a-brac associated with the
past members of the household. Where there is only one
couple in the house, this room is reserved as a sort of parlor
into which none but distinguished visitors are admitted.

[523] The family heirlooms are there, and, lining the walls along
with religious pictures, there appear the photographs of the
members of the family, especially the familiar daguerre-
types of the last century. Whatever "fine" pieces of furniture
[352] there may be, such as highboys, cabinets, brass candlesticks,
are kept there, as are all the religious objects used when mass
is celebrated in the house. All these objects are inalienable

[425] in the sense that the family parts with them only when it
[428] must. They descend from father to son with the house and
the farm on which it stands.

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must. They descend from father to son with the house and the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" mentioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, out-houses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

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888 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

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183 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

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183 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

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842 of the farm on the stipulation that his brother should marry. The brother thus got wife, dowry, and farm; and the identity of land and family was preserved for a new generation.

428 Time and time again that continuity of identification lies at the root of the behavior which follows upon the transference of control within a family.

● 592 602 Particularly in the case of the incomplete farm families, a wide variety of arrangements appear to effect the same transition without going beyond the group. As the following generality explains, it is only the "crabbit" farmer who breaks through the circle of reciprocal obligation:

If there is no heir to hold the land, they [the childless couple] might give it to a friend, the nearest to the husband, or the wife might give it to the nearest to her. The husband might take a boy from his brother or, if he's crabbit, he will sell it and go to town and drink the money.

But the second contingency that the wife might give the land to one of her kindred may be a source of trouble. The great emphasis upon patriliney militates against it. As the countrymen say, they "want to keep the name on the house; they are dying to have the same name on the house."

582 At any rate some of the matches between cousins arise, 836 consciously or not, because of this desire. And they occur here and there in country districts, even though the full weight of the Church's authority is against them. Countrymen on occasion have explained that they are love-matches. By impregnating the girl, the boy forces the priest to allow the marriage "for cause." Soberer opinion, nevertheless, condemns such action. It is no light thing to "destroy a girl's character."

592 There are many more subtle ways of effecting the same end. Nieces and nephews, even grandchildren, may be 562 brought into the house, and matches made for them. In 428 this regard a conflict arises between legal right and social custom. The country districts recognize only vaguely the

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right of a woman to hold property. The patrilineal identification of family and land is incompatible with it. What-
ever farm a woman works or controls is regarded as a trust
for a son or brother of her husband or father. 562
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The conflict is naturally never so phrased, nor is it ever
debated. Yet there are many instances which show behavior,
accepted fully as right and just by the local community,
which reveal the patrilineal identification. A widow, for
instance, remains upon the farm only if the children are
beginning to grow up. If they are very young, she returns
to her parents and a husband's brother may take the farm.
Even if she marries, she and her new husband merely hold
the land in trust. The new husband is, graphically, a
"stranger to the land." 562
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As a "stranger" he has no right to it. In a village in mid-
Clare, to give an example, a "Yank" returned after many
years in the United States to his father's farm, from which
he and all his brothers had emigrated. His mother, now
dead, had married again, and her two children by her second
husband still worked the farm. D—, the "Yank," threw the
husband out into the road, told him to go home, and took
up the land. Later when he gave fortunes to both of the
children, the village felt he had made ample amends for the
stepfather's years of toil. 587
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Whether or not there is a legally executed will, it is much
the same. In Luogh, a son, inheriting a farm upon the
death of his mother, allowed her old second husband to stay
on with him. He was said to be "very kind to the old man."
In Inagh again, though a small farmer, dying, willed the
family's farm to his wife and children, a brother on a neigh-
boring farm got most of the land. "He paid her nothing for
it. He took bits of it here and there until it was all gone."
Whatever protest there is must come from the growing
nephews. Inagh makes none.

In matchmaking, too, legal form may be subordinated to 000

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487 paths crisscrosses the fields in all directions from house to house and across the countryside beyond.

987 Old man O'Donoghue's house, the third in the village,
573 is the "old men's house." Mrs. Ruin, a neighbor, will tell you what the old man means to the men of the village:

The old man is getting weaker and when he is gone out of it the village won't be the same. He will be the greatest loss. It is round his fireplace the men gather. Where will they go when he dies?

But the question has not yet arisen for the men who meet there nearly every night, particularly in winter, when the evening is long and the work day its shortest. Soon after the evening meal they begin to gather. Occasionally this or that habitué may not come, but it is always the same group of men who stride across the threshold with a "God bless all here," and take their accustomed places.

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542 O'Donoghue has the place of honor in the chair to the right of the fire. He is an old man now and no longer active beyond the house door. He lives here with his nephew, a man of fifty, and his nephew's wife. The couple have no children and must depend upon their own efforts in the working of the farm. It is a good farm and the nephew works it well, deferring to the old man in occasional matters.

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573 O'Donoghue is the "judge" in this gathering. In the nightly discussions which take place around his fireplace, he has a judicial role. He is regarded as a wise man to whose opinions all must defer. Usually they know he contents himself with a word of affirmation, or now and again a slow and measured judgment upon a current topic. He initiates nothing and only occasionally adds a non-judicial bit to the conversation. Then he shows himself to have a fund of funny and apt anecdotes as good as any other man's. He rarely generalizes. When he does, his remarks deal with the "old times."

Silent as this shrewd old man is, his is the central position

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573 in the group. Comments and questions are phrased through
521 him. He takes the preferred verbal bit and passes it on
among the others. And when agreement is finally reached,
it is his quiet "So it is" that settles the point for good.

573 O'Halloran sits on the hob across the hearth from him.
He is the "drawer-down" in the scheme of jocular titles
which includes most of the group. O'Halloran is a man of
fifty but mature. He owns a farm a little better perhaps
[542] than most, just beyond the village. He works it with his
wife and six children, the eldest of whom is nearing twenty.
As he has no parents left alive, he is the "old man" and the
man of the house. But individually he is more. "He has a
great head on him," they say. He has had a somewhat wider
[484] experience, once having traveled as a salesman over the
446 roads of southern Ireland. Yet, in spite of the fact that he
is occasionally a little skeptical and his politics are some-
what suspect to the villagers, who are today De Valera men
to a man, he is emphatically one of them.

573 His title of "drawer-down" is an apt one. O'Halloran
521 seeks information. He most frequently of them all brings
up points of interest and questions of the day. These he
addresses to O'Donoghue, who passes them on for general
discussion. Like all the rest of them his illustrations are apt
and his anecdotes definite and precise, but his chief role is
to "draw the talk down" to common levels of interest which
allow all to take part.

573 O'Loughlin usually occupies the other hob. He has no
521 real place here. He is a bachelor, aged fifty or so, and,
589 though he comes here, he has little to say. He is seemingly
silent all the time, and he breaks his silence only to add to
unanimity. For O'Loughlin is very poor and lives alone.
Having no family, he can neither coor nor work his land to
best advantage. And occasionally he works on the road,
breaking stones with the boys of the village. Just as he has
no voice here, he has no title either.

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185

Roche, "the public prosecutor," sits by the fire, opposite the old man O'Donoghue. He is a man of sixty or so, with a wife of the same age and an unmarried son and daughter, both in their thirties, still at home. His is a good farm and he is still active upon it. He, too, has a reputation for shrewdness, but his role here is a different one. Roche demands "why?" He makes one bring out one's best arguments, and pursues a point to its final conclusion. There his interest stops and he makes way for O'Donoghue, who sums up the agreement of the group. Roche earns his title well. He tests out the other's mettle. No one is offended at his "prosecution," for it clears the issue and brings out the right and the wrong upon which all can agree and O'Donoghue phrase judgment. 593 521 592

Behind them, a little further into the middle of the room away from the hearth, sits Cullinan, the "senator." Cullinan lives across the lake, where he works a middling farm with a wife and five children. Several of the sons are nearing twenty-five and Cullinan himself is well past fifty. 573 592

The "senator" is a weighty man. His part in the *cuaire* is in character. Cullinan is the one of them most fertile in cogent and fitting anecdotal illustrations. In a scheme of references, such as this, to past events and traditional precedents, Cullinan's many memories of persons and happenings, slowly and accurately phrased, give weight to the evening discussions. 573 521

Still further behind them, and often perched upon settle or table in the kitchen, are two other habitués. The elder of them is Noonan, a man of sixty, who lives in the village with a wife a little younger than himself and two boys and a girl, out of a once numerous progeny, still at home. The children are in their twenties and help him in his still active conduct of the farm. 573 592

Privately at least, the others think Noonan a bit of a fool. He is as good a farmer as any of them, it is true, and knows 573 521

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573 how to drive a shrewd bargain. But his role at *cuaird* is not
521 a weighty one. Noonan is a very voluble man. He can be
counted upon at all times to enliven the gathering with
many opinions on all subjects. His volubility makes him
more vulnerable than the rest to the public prosecutor's
relentless logic, but it helps too to keep the conversation
alive and active. Consequently, though he has no important
title, he is a member of long standing.

573 The younger of the two sitting in back is John Quin. His
● 542 position is a little anomalous, though he is a Rynamona
man by birth and blood. Quin lives on a good farm just
outside the village. He married-in there, taking over the
[582] place of a dead husband. But, true to the country custom,
it was not the widow he married. She brought in a sister,
who, in turn, married Quin. But both women are still living
in the house. The elder sister has become the "old woman"
and is treated more like a parent than a contemporary. It is
Quin and his wife, the younger sister, who work the farm
and who regard it as their own. Their claim is a perfect
one, were it not for one misfortune: they are childless at
fifty.

573 Quin is thus neither fully a young man nor fully an old
561 one, as the countryside reckons age status. His place in the
evening gathering reflects this intermediate state. In the
two years in which the authors had the old men's house at
Rynamona under observation, Quin was going through a
transition. It was one which he could not describe himself,
but which showed itself well in his behavior.

573 When we first came, Quin divided his evenings between
561 the old men's house and card playing in several of the young
521 men's gathering places. At one of these, to be described
shortly, he was an important figure. His pronouncements
were listened to with respect. He had "weight," and he
conducted himself importantly and showed a serious de-
meanor and a little disdain for frivolous pursuits. In the

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old men's house he looked a different person. He was often⁵⁷³
silent or contented himself with answering questions.⁵⁶¹
When he did speak, it was to "act the playboy," in the⁵²¹
country phrase. It seemed to be a periodic fluctuation with
him. One evening he would be silent and the next he would
be more than ready to joke, to render a song, to dance, and
to break into playful banter. Sometimes his lively efforts
were successful. Sometimes they were not. But the playboy
role did not last long. A year later he was a constant visitor,
and he had given up all other visits. He had moved in.
O'Donoghue, the "judge," passed judgment one evening
which affirmed his new place. "He's a bit of a playboy," he
said, "but there's a good head on him."

These seven men make up the old men's *cuaire*. As the⁵⁷³
evidence of their behavior shows, they are a closely knit⁸⁸⁷
clique with a code of conduct and valuation of their own,
one strong enough to enforce a specific personality on each
of the members in accord with his role in the group.

To appraise the *raison d'être* of such a group in Ryna-
mona, we must examine it in relation to the rest of the
community. These seven are not the only old men in the
community. Roche, the prosecutor, had an elder brother
with a good farm across the lake on the line between
Rynamona and the next townland, Carhunamadra. But
the elder Roche is seventy-five and no longer stirs out the
door. He is too feeble to come to the *cuaire* house, and his
faculties are failing. His sons, still young men, work the
farm.

But there is another as well, a more active old man.
Moroney is perhaps the strongest farmer in Rynamona. His
house in the village is the best also, and he has the best-
stocked farm. Moroney and his wife, at sixty, have a son^[592]
and daughter nearing thirty still at home. The four work
energetically and the household is prosperous. Each year
Moroney stands for them in the "station," and the family's

FAMILISM AND SEX

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by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination.

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But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

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But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

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Ake Campbell: Notes on the Irish house

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Donegal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up at right angles to the floor. 342
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[184]

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the wheelbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table. 592●
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[775]
[171]

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, both and *tigh dubh*, where the in- [184]
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[171]

181 I did not know this as I came to Luogh. But I was to learn it soon in Luogh and in other communities in County Clare. Later I was to find it so even more widely; in newspapers, in novels, in court records, in statistical reports, in political bombasts. It was a way of life with its own laws which included Luogh and the Blaskets and even the fertile small farms of rich Tipperary.

114 When I first came to Luogh I knew only that in this remote little community of small farmers I should find something of the old tradition still alive. My learning was a piecemeal process — a sketching out of wider and wider ramifications of the observations which came my way.

It is this process to which I wish to devote the remainder of this lecture. It is a process in which you can follow me. Perhaps better than anything else it will prepare us for an anthropological study of Irish rural life.

Let me illustrate this process with two examples. I shall call them the 'west room' and the 'old man's curse'. Both of them are related to old custom and both will serve to show the process by which one lays bare the rural life of which old custom is a part.

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361 The house to which my road into Luogh finally led was a typical small farmer's cottage. It was one of twenty-six in Luogh. It was the seat of a small farm of sixteen acres (with eight more in the valley), 'the place of four cows and a horse', as the country-

1 THE INTERPRETATION OF CUSTOM 23

people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 502
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals.
All farms are described in this way, for by the cows
and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats
and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have
more to say of agriculture in another context; I
think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater,
better built and kept, than many of the others, but
it was like the others in all essentials. It was a white-
washed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate
(though it was only a few years ago that they gave
up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and
south, each with a door opening directly out into
the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for
sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story.
The central room, the largest by far, was the kit-
chen. There the family passed their lives and pre-
pared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The
hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large
enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on
either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung
the cooking-pots out into the room from off the
fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first
example.

II COUNTRYMEN AT WORK 43

stand these controls is to reach at least one nucleus²⁴¹
of the countryman's way of life. 593

In County Clare, as in all rural Ireland, the small farmer's family lives upon the holding it works. As a rule, the farmhouse is an isolated building standing upon its own ground and forming an integral part of the holding. This is the familiar type of farm we know; Meizen calls it the *Einzelhof*. There are many other types of settlement in Ireland: villages whose fields lie round about in somewhat the fashion of the Russian *mir*; striping fields; and the crazy-quilt pattern of 'rundale'; but the *Einzelhof* has won out historically. Anyway, whatever the type of holding, the farm family spends its entire life upon it: sleeping, eating, giving birth and dying there, and sallying forth every day for work. Whether or not there is a topographic identity between house and land, there is a social one. The countryside knows the farm as a unit. The farm shares the name of the family working it. It is inalienably associated with them. 361 592 ●

Since cattle play so large a part in rural economy, 231
it is natural that this unit should be known and 311
judged as 'the place of so many cows'. For in 592
Clare the land is valued for its pasture. It is divided into 'field' for grazing, and 'meadow' where the grass is cut for hay, and 'garden', the small tillage plot. In mountain areas, it may also include rough mountain grazing, called 'moun-

311 tain', and wherever possible, it includes a 'bit of
231 bog' for 'turf' for the year's fuel. When a small
592 farmer tells you he 'has the place of four cows' he
sums up this sort of farm, judging it for its ability
to support himself and his family in the country
manner and to give pasture to four milch cows. In
the phrase he epitomizes rural economy.

592 Ordinarily the house opens directly into the
361 'haggard', as the farmyard is called. There in the
haggard are the cabins in which cattle are housed
and the various sheds and stalls, often built into
the masonry of the house itself. In them, farm
machines, tools and carts are kept and crops and
seed are stored. Hens and other poultry roam at
will through the haggard and are housed there, and
in one of the sheds pig or pigs find their quarters.
The winter's supply of fodder stands there in the
form of the great hayrick. The straw-covered pit of
turnips and mangels, not far away, will serve for
men and cattle; and the turf-rick is near at hand.
As for the house itself we have already looked in-
side, in our search for the 'west room'.

592 The family with which this unit is associated
centres its activity round house and haggard. Even
for the men, whose work lies primarily in field,
garden and meadow, work centres round the house
for a good part of the year. If I give you a sketch
of this activity as my co-workers and I saw it day
after day in several rural communities in Clare, I
hope to throw its general features into relief.

II COUNTRYMEN AT WORK 45

Following the countryman at his work, we can⁵⁹² learn what his role is, what determines it, and what keeps him to it; we can see its controls and the organization of labour it entails.

The first duty of the farm family's day falls to⁴⁶² 'the woman of the house'. Before the others are up,⁵¹² she rakes together such live ashes as remain in the slaked turf fire, puts down new sods, and rekindles the blaze. Then she hangs the kettle on the hook over the hearth, making ready for the first tea of the day. All day long the kettle will hang there, for^[272] at any moment she must be ready to serve a cup of tea to husband, children and visitors. With the first tea comes breakfast: bread, eggs and milk.

By the time breakfast is over, the household is ready for its workaday life. The men are up and dressed for the day's tasks, and the farm wife and^[264] mother who serves them and stands by unwilling to sit down till they have had their fill, has begun her daily round. She takes her place later with her daughters and young children who help her throughout the day.

But familiar housework is not the whole of the woman's duty. Her work takes her beyond the house door. After breakfast she takes the milk buckets and goes to milk the cows in the sheds. This is merely one of many trips she makes out into the haggard, for fuel, for water, and to feed the animals and poultry. Milking over, she must not rest, for the whole process of converting milk

(3). VITAL STATISTICS (GENERAL AND ECONOMIC).

161 (a.) *Population.*—The population of these islands, though still dense, is, like that of the rest of Ireland, steadily decreasing, though in this case the decline is of recent date compared with many other parts of the country.

161 Between the years 1851 and 1871 the population had increased from 1047 persons, occupying 196 houses, to 1262, and 251, respectively. 167 Some time after 1871, however, emigration began to take a sensible effect; and between that year and the census of 1891 there has been a loss in people of 20·99 per cent., and in houses of 11·55 per cent. That the decrease is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths for the decennial period 1880–1890, in which time the births exceeded the deaths by 89 or 38·7 per cent., the respective numbers being births 230, deaths 141.

161 The Table given below shows the population of the islands at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head. It thus indicates the period at which the decrease began, and the amount of congestion of the district, both past and present. This congestion, however, must be greater than what the figures show, as under the heading of Inishbofin are grouped some fifty-four other islands or islets, all uninhabited, and varying in size from seventy-four acres downwards. Some of these are utilized for grazing by the people of the two larger islands, but a large number of them are quite useless, being mere barren rocks.

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	1047	196	5·34	3·00
1861	1236	239	5·17	2·55
1871	1262	251	5·03	2·56
1881	1166	250	4·67	2·70
1891	997	215	4·64	3·10

161 That the overcrowding is, even now, great, will be seen when it is considered that the density of population per square mile is 202, whilst that of the Aran Islands is 171, of the county of Galway 86, and of Ireland, as a whole, 146.¹

¹ In the Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland (1846), the population of the islands in 1831 is given as 1462, number of houses not given; population in 1841 as 1612, houses, 285. The decrease afterwards is evidently due to the famine in 1847.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894

ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

BROWNE—*Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishshark.* 339

The distribution of population, inhabited houses, and out-buildings in 1891, was as follows:—

Islands.	Area.	POPULATION.			Houses.	Outbuildings and Farmsteadings.
		Persons.	Males.	Females.		
Inishbofin,	A. R. P. 2312 1 16	874	450	424	194	123
Inishshark,	581 1 30	123	61	62	28	14
54 other islands,	257 3 35	—	—	—	—	—
Totals,	3151 3 1	997	511	486	*222	137

It will be seen that the male population exceeds the female by 95, the cause evidently being the greater emigration of females than of males.

The drain does not seem to have affected any one class of the males (as regards age) more than another, as the number of men between the ages of 20 and 60 is 203, or slightly more than one-fifth of the whole population.

Since the census was taken some slight change has occurred, for, according to a return obtained on the islands, there are now 186 families on Inishbofin, and 26 on Inishshark, being a loss of three families since 1891. A larger number of young people than usual is also said to have emigrated since then. Many of the older men state that emigration has taken away the finest men from the islands, especially Inishshark, and say that formerly the stature of the men was greater than it is now. I must say, however, that those of the elder generation still remaining are not as a rule better built or taller than their sons and grandsons.

(n.) *Acreege and Rental.*—The total area is, as stated above, 3151 acres, the valuation of which, including houses, land, &c., is £572 6s. A very considerable proportion of the surface of the islands is commonage, the exact amount and distribution of which I am enabled

* Of these, 215 were inhabited.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895

ER6 Rural Irish ER6
KilmoreBROWNE—*Ethnography of the Mullet, Inishkea, & Portacloy*. 607

townlands having only been temporary. That this loss is entirely due to emigration is proved by the returns of births and deaths in the registration district of Binghamstown for the decennial period 1884-1893 in which space of time the births numbered 1260, and the deaths 707, an excess of 553, or 22·7 per cent. The following Table, which refers only to the parish of Kilmore, shows the population of the district at each census since 1851, with the number of inhabited houses, average number of inhabitants per house, and of acres per head.¹

Census.	Population.	Houses.	Inhabitants. per house.	Acres per head.
1851	7379	1106	6·67	3·99
1861	6452	1243	5·19	4·57
1871	5552	1054	5·27	5·31
1881	5327	911	5·85	5·53
1891	4111	694	5·92	7·17

[592] ●

The density of population is thus seen to be about 89 per square mile, but varies with locality, being greatest on S. Inishkea, where it is about 304.

The town of Belmullet, which is not included in the table given above, has fluctuated much since its foundation in 1825. In 1831 its population was 585, and it continued to increase until after 1851, when it had attained its maximum of 935; from that time forth it declined. In 1861 its inhabitants numbered 907; in 1871, 849; in 1881 there was a slight increase, 852; and at the last census, in 1891, the population had fallen to 652.

It was difficult to lay down any exact boundaries to what, for the purposes of this report, is termed the Portacloy district; but the three townlands—Srahataggle, Portacloy, and Curraunboy, from which most of those measured at Portacloy came, have been taken to represent it; in these the population has not undergone the same change as that of Kilmore, the population having risen since 1851, from 248, inhabiting 46 houses, to 299 in 53 houses.

¹ In 1831 the population of Kilmore Erris was 9287.

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

352 admirably illustrates the economy of space and function characteristic of Irish kitchen fittings, but I doubt whether this rather complicated piece of furniture is of any great antiquity: it was probably introduced by planters or adapted from a settle fitted with a coffer seat.

[264] The black-houses, as described in the nineteenth century, had no table, and there are still to be seen, in Donegal for instance, houses where there is no kitchen table. At meal-times the family sit around a shallow potato basket resting on the circle of knees. The origin of the tripod tray-table of south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia is surely to be sought in a similar custom. In fact the Blasket Island table was described as a tripod to which was fitted a board which hung on the wall when not in use.¹ The little round table is known from many parts of western Europe. There is, for example, the three-legged 'cricket' table of Wales, which has a special place in the affections of the family. Placed near the fire, it is reserved at meal-times for the father and mother while the children and servants eat at the big table. In Ireland the kitchen table is a flimsy construction, and its place is against the side wall, under a window. Not infrequently it is hinged to the wall as a 'falling leaf table' which drops when not in use, thus enlarging the open space in front of the fire.

Bishop Pococke describes the Tirawley (Mayo) table as 'a long sort of stool about 20 inches high and broad and two yards long',² clearly designed to be stowed away along a wall. Small tables which have been found in the bogs are little more than small boards, their four short legs being cut from the solid. They are provided with holes by which they could be transported or hung up when not in use (Fig. 26). It follows that table-chairs were unnecessary: long, low, narrow stools or three [516] legged 'creepies' would serve, and the children would have squatted eastern-fashion on the floor.

352 The table, therefore, in the words of a Swedish student of
592 Irish ethnology, 'never attracted the social activities of the house, and there are no ceremonies connected with the places at the table, as in countries where the table is the predominating

¹T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman* (1934), 40.

²Pococke's *Tour*, 1752 (1891), 87.

FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

social and family centre'.¹ The table has never supplanted the fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in the English language gave its name to a committee, has not replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776] or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769] around the fire.

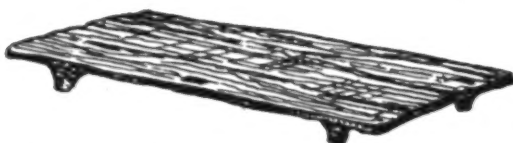


FIG. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke. The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said, that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

¹A. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

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choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

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Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already

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gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance

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joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well;

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the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

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There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of
Households

Personnel

30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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Implicit in these statistics are such Irish phenomena as monogamy, the predominance of the nuclear family (Only 10.3 percent are extended in Inis Beag.), family exogamy, patrilocal residence, and a high incidence of celibacy. The last listed bachelor who lives with his widowed sister-in-law, and frequently is visited by a brother's adolescent grandson from the mainland, is regarded by many bachelors as fortunate—"He has a woman and a boy to work and no responsibilities."

Inheritance in the island is patrilineal, and before a man can marry, his father or widowed mother must "pass on" the property to him. To encourage aged men to surrender ownership of their land, a statute forbids their receiving the old age at 70 years until they have so acted. But despite this law, six Inis Beag elders aged 70 to 79 years—with a total of seven bachelor sons ranging in age from 32 to 47 years (not counting eight others who have emigrated but are eligible to inherit)—still maintain ownership themselves. When a man is without sons, he most commonly wills the land to a brother's son or arranges to have a man wed his daughter and "marry in" to the household. An in-marrying son-in-law, it is interesting to note, may pay a bride wealth, which usually is much larger than the dowry of the girl, for he has no land of his own. Among contemporary landholders, five have obtained property from uncles, six from widowed mothers, and two by marrying in. Other land in Inis Beag has been procured through purchase, exchange, gift-giving, and land dispute verdicts.

A major cause of celibacy, late marriage, disputes, and emigration related to the system of inheritance, seldom mentioned either in writings about Inis Beag or by the islanders, is the common practice of a father playing off his sons against one another for the patrimony in order to achieve favored treatment for his wife and himself in their waning years. Elders are well treated, in part as a result of the above and in part out of the fear that after death their ghosts will punish those who have maltreated them. Often the playing off of sons for the patrimony leads to factionalism within the family and may provoke a secretly favored son to emigrate or, more seriously, all sons acting in concert to depart in anger and disgust. Today, a total of 22 married men, widowers, and widows whose average age is 65.7, hold land that is inheritable by a total of 56 sons whose average age is 30.1 years. (The 16 elders who have a total of 20 sons in the island average 66.7 years of age and their offspring 33.6.) The uncertainty about which sibling will inherit is reflected in these figures: of the 59 present landholders, 47 percent are first born, 42 percent second, 8 percent third, and 3 percent fourth and beyond.

Although the Inis Beag family is totally exogamous, the village is only 78.3 percent exogamous (The range for the four villages is from 75 to 83 percent.). Since 1911, six women have married men, mostly farmers, living in communities along the neighboring coast and only one an Inis Thiar islander, while four mainland and five Inis Thiar women have wed men from Inis Beag. During this same 50 year period, six local men have married into contiguous mainland settlements and one into Inis Thiar, but no men from the outside have married into the island. As we have noted already, immigrants for two or three generations are regarded as strangers by the folk, and the same is true of in-marrying wives; these women are treated aloofly and are the victims of much spiteful gossip. Many female siblings marry locally rather than emigrate—one case of four sisters, five of

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829 government increase its services and subsidies even more, reveal the underlying
[522] tension within those who are most strongly committed to the local tradition and
wish its perpetuation.

167 The index of my field notes contains more references to emigration than
168 to any other category, for seldom in an interview, whether guided or open-ended,
829 did the topic fail to come up, no matter what was the initial subject under con-
12 sideration. Of the more than 30 causes of the phenomenon yielded by my analysis,
all are known to the folk, and they are ever eager to express opinions as to the
relative weights which should be attached to those that they deem significant. My
wife and I usually were solicited for our opinions as well whenever the topic was
addressed. I will deal below with only the major causes of emigration from Inis
Beag, and will consider first those which are internal—the "push" factors—and then
those which are external—the "pull" factors. The islanders emphasize external
causes in their own deliberations, but those who are not apologists for the *status*
quo, or who are genuinely bewildered by the exodus of young people in recent
years, are able to identify the internal ones also, but are less willing to assign
them sufficient weight. Emigration is the topic about which my wife and I could
be most objective and outspoken concerning the role of the church and obtain the
most agreement and arouse the least resentment among our respondents.

167 Paramount among the push factors are the previously considered system of
428 inheritance and the causes underlying the prevalence of celibacy, late marriage, and
581 personality depression. The fact that only one son in a family can inherit land,
• 592 which forces his brothers to emigrate, is the internal factor most stressed in the
[121] literature pertaining to Inis Beag, but least stressed by the folk. The reason for
this is that until recently it was rather common for siblings without land to remain
on the island, thanks to the benevolence of their brothers and the government and
their ability to support themselves by craft work, keeping tourists, fishing, managing
[162] shops, and obtaining remittances. Of the 71 households in Inis Beag, 28 are headed
by male siblings: 20 in which 10 pairs of brothers and their families live, 3 in
which 3 pairs of bachelor siblings reside, 3 in which 3 brothers and their
families live, and 2 in which 3 siblings reside—two as bachelors in one and
[182] the third with his family in the other. It is apparent that other factors, of equal
or greater importance, are stimulating emigration.

167 The push factor given the most weight by the islanders is the unwillingness
168 of men to marry—"The lads are too fussy, and the girls get tired of waiting and
581 go off." But the fact that male "fussiness" is based on such conditions as parents
[182] opposing the marriage of their sons for various reasons and bachelors being loath
to assume the responsibilities of marriage, especially its sexual responsibilities,
[162] seldom is probed. Sometimes it is the girls who are accused of "putting off" poten-
tial spouses by being too discriminating, but this accusation becomes untenable
when one observes that there is but a single unmarried woman between the ages
of 26 and 44 years in Inis Beag (as compared to 18 men), and that the average
age at which women emigrate has dropped from 24.5 years during the 1941-1950
decade to 21.1 during the last decade (as compared to 24.9 to 23.8 for men). Some
girls admit that they are emigrating because the possibility of their being asked to
marry is remote, but far more of them are dissatisfied with the lot of married